

## Source B

Cooper, Harris. "Summer Learning Loss: The Problem and Some Solutions." *ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education*. ERIC Digest. May 2003. Web. 5 Aug. 2010.

*The following is excerpted from an article published in a scholarly journal on education.*

Three approaches to preventing summer learning loss are offered most often: extending the school year, providing summer school, and modifying the school calendar.

**Extended School Year.** Most of the arguments offered in support of an extended school year invoke international comparisons showing that the number of days American students spend in school lags behind most other industrialized nations. For example, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1993) reported that most students in the United States spend between 175 and 180 days in school each year, while students in Japan spend 240 days in school.

Arguments against extending the school year generally question whether more time in school automatically translates into more time on task. For example, the National Education Association (1987) questioned whether additional time in school might simply lead to additional fatigue for students. Many argue that unless additional time is accompanied by changes in teaching strategy and curricula, the added time may be frittered away [citation omitted]. Related to this argument is the notion that adding, for example, 5 or 6 days to a school year represents only a 3% increase in school time. [Experts have] suggested that 35 extra days would be needed to produce a noticeable change in student achievement. Thus, given other options for spending education dollars, opponents ask whether money might not more effectively be spent on improving the quality of instruction or reducing class size.

**Summer School.** Summer learning loss also can be used to argue for increasing students' access to summer school. A research synthesis . . . used both meta-analytic and narrative procedures to integrate the results of 93 evaluations of summer school. Results revealed that summer programs focusing on remedial, accelerated, or enriched learning had a positive impact on the knowledge and skills of participants. Although all students benefited from summer school, students from middle-class homes showed larger positive effects than students from disadvantaged homes. Remedial programs had larger effects when the program was relatively small and when instruction was individualized. As would be expected from the summer learning loss literature, remedial programs may have more positive effects on math than on reading. Requiring parent involvement also appeared related to more effective programs. Students at all grade levels benefited from remedial summer school, but students in the earliest grades and in secondary school may benefit most.

**Modified Calendars.** Finally, summer learning loss also could be used to argue for modifying the school calendar to do away with the long summer break. Many proponents of school calendar change call for modified arrangements in which children might or might not attend school for more days, but the long summer vacation is replaced by shorter cycles of attendance breaks.